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the

The Voice of the New York Law School Community

# Finally In Charge

Vol. 3, No. 4

April 2002



In the Hot Seat: the L's own Ninowtka Mier experiencing what it is to be Dean of NYLS, with a little help from the Man himself

## Dean for a Day

### Ninowtka Mier

I was Dean for Day. Thanks to the L's generosity, I bid on last year's Public Interest Coalition Auction—Dean for a Day. When I won the bid, I had no idea what to expect as Dean for a Day. After several schedule conflicts and missed phone calls, I had my chance to know what being a Dean was all about on Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup>.

I thought it was going to be uneventful—after all, there is nothing that seems really tantalizing about being a Dean—except that YOU are the boss. So, I guess I was going to see what it was to be the head-chief-in-charge of New York Law School. I arrived at 9:30am sharp ready for anything. As I was led into his office,

the first thing I saw was a portrait of a typical courtroom scene. Of course, Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble were the attorneys sitting on opposing sides, and poor Dino was on the witness stand. I turned to hang my coat and came face-to-face with the unimaginable - a crying velvet Elvis painting hanging on the closet door.

The Dean clacked away on his computer keyboard, preparing a message to the student body that marked the six-months that have passed since the tragic events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Beside him, I noticed rows of family photographs. He just had to look over his shoulder, and there they were—smiling back at him. Standing in no particular order, they are certainly the room's centerpiece.

He finished writing, read

over the message and hit "send." The phone rang, DJ Mazer, the Dean's right hand, walked in with the morning mail. His library of hard cover legal treatises and textbooks lined the walls, but they could not hide the eclectic collector within our very own Dean. Amongst his collection—a jar of jelly beans, a pair of orange dice, a rainbow Koosh ball, and a picture of Bugs Bunny and the Tasmanian Devil in golfing gear.

Basketball and golf trophies (yes, he earned them), and a signed Chicago Bulls pendant are only a few of the ornaments that adorn Dean Richard Matasar's office. "We have lots of toys," chuckled the Dean as he reached into a basket of red, yellow, and hot pink rubber balls, scooping up his favorite, the Koosh ball. He tossed

it in one hand as he calmed an irate caller—each time, tossing the ball higher and higher.

But his day-to-day is filled with anything but playtime. DJ Mazer shuffled in and said, "Today is a light day."

And we were off! 9:45am: Work out details of the Faculty Day Presentation with Associate Dean for Public Affairs, Altagracia Dilone Levat. 10:00am: Iron out panel discussion details with Professor Simon and Professor Gordon-Reed. 11:00am: Discuss possible international law project with an NYLS alum. 12:30pm: Make opening remarks at a book party, check and respond to e-mail, look over mail—and that's all before lunch!

Amidst his official duties,

Continued on next page

## Inside:

NEWS ..... 2-3

EDITORIAL ..... 4

### FEATURES

Get Perspectives ..... 5

Spotlight on Women .... 6

Fifteen Tips ..... 7

What They Left Out ..... 9

Who needs a 4.0? ..... 9

Bar Story ..... 10

Movie Maverick ..... 10

LETTERS TO THE L .... 11



# news

## School Honors Student Heroes

Kelli Brownewell

On Tuesday April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2002, New York Law School will honor its bravest students at the 2002 Spring Gala: A Benefit in Honor 9/11 Student Heroes.

The Gala, which will honor approximately 23 students, will be held at the Marriott World Financial Center. Located in Lower Manhattan, the Marriott was chosen in an effort to show support to businesses in Downtown Manhattan.

All NYLS students to be honored contributed to the rescue and/or recovery efforts during, and following, the Sept 11<sup>th</sup> attacks at the World Trade Center.

Customarily, NYLS usually holds a Spring Dinner Dance this time of year honoring an alumnus with a lifetime achievement award. However, the school thought it would be inappropriate to have the event this year and, instead, chose to honor students who willingly devoted their time to the recovery efforts of the 9/11 tragedy.

## NYLS Ranks Third Tier

According to an email sent by Dean Richard Matasar to the NYLS community, *U.S. News & World Report* released its 2003 Graduate School Rankings on Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> 2002. New York Law School ranked as a Third Tier school with a 70% BAR passage rate, an improvement from the School's Fourth Tier ranking the year before.

"I was tempted not to send the memo because you know what, who cares?" commented Matasar while speaking at the School's Annual Journals Banquet on April 5<sup>th</sup>. "What's important is the intrinsic value of what we do everyday."

He stressed the importance of hard work and dedication to our studies, our profession and our community.

"What I care about is five years from now, when you are back here and saying how much our school has grown and the way it has grown."

## NLG Honors Professor Meyer

Tiffany Almy &  
Richard Gaeckle

On Friday, March 8, the New York Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) honored Professor Carlin Meyer at its 65<sup>th</sup> Annual National Lawyer's Guild (NLG) dinner, held at the Imperial Ballroom at the Sheraton in New York City. Professor Meyer teaches Family Law, Employment Law, and the Employment Practice Seminar and Workshop at NYLS. She is the Vice-President of the New York City Chapter of the NLG and served as Chapter President from 1981-1983.

Professor Meyer has spent most of her life in pursuit of justice. Her political activism during the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam war movements translated into her progressive scholarship and fight for gender equality. However, her acceptance speech did not focus on past battles of the NLG, or on the contemporary issues of today, such as the abridgment of civil liberties in our post-September 11<sup>th</sup> nation. Rather, noting that the NLG was founded on the principle that human rights are more valuable than property rights, she noted that today, just as during the New Deal era, property rights were given precedence over hu-

man values. She cited to the growing international disparity of wealth, such as the fact that 3 billion human beings today live on less than \$2 a day. She argued that trade rules and other legal decisions favored the wealthy, and privileged powerful corporations. Professor Meyer also focused on the importance of family values in the face of these more prominent, challenging issues and offered some recommendations on how to make caregiving a more important priority.

Professor Meyer offered some shocking, yet realistic, statistics about the child and elder care industries. Caregivers, she explained, are often the lowest paid employees. Since property rights often trump human rights, due to fierce economic competition and corporate greed, the quality of care in such industries is frequently sacrificed. By way of example, she said "Just ask a nurse, who can't stop to hold a patient's hand, because she is only allowed four minutes for the task at hand, and may be fired if she 'wastes time.'"

"[I]n a world in which human rights are truly more important than property rights, who will care for the humans whose rights we seek to protect?" said Meyers. "Who will raise the children, or tend to the

elderly or disabled, who will nurture the community institutions so necessary for neighborhoods to flourish – and how will we provide for and treat these nurturers?"

Professor Meyer recommended more direct governmental support for caregivers through the creation of laws and social norms that value care giving. She cautioned, however, that this is not enough. She said there needs to be "limitations on permissible hours and weeks of paid work" because studies show that care declines as paid work hours increase. She recommended that we "treat care as a civic duty, not a personal choice—and create disincentives for shirking."

Though her ideas might sound utopian, she argued, so did environmentalism and gender justice in the not too recent past, yet these have gained considerable ground in recent years.

"We owe it to our children, and to our aging selves (well, some of us). If we don't care, we will inevitably sacrifice human rights to those of property," said Meyer.

The NLG was established in 1937 as the first human rights organization. For more information about the Guild go to [www.nlg.org](http://www.nlg.org) or email [nlgno@nlg.org](mailto:nlgno@nlg.org).

## Dean for a Day

Continued from first page

he took care of more personal matters. His daughter called for support before having her wisdom teeth pulled. His son also called for advice about college. Then, a somber DJ Mazer walked in with sobering news—another NYLS alum, Weirong Lin '99, perished in the September 11<sup>th</sup> WTC attack. Dean Matasar grabbed the phone and called Alta to confirm the news—a routine he was sorry to repeat.

But the day's end was nowhere in sight. My stomach groaned and I was worried he was going to forget about lunch. Thankfully, DJ gently reminded him to feed the starving student and we walked around the corner to the Independent. Ever wonder what the Dean of New York Law School likes to eat? Well, I have the answer: Grilled cheese topped with tomato and bacon, side of potato chips and a diet coke. Though he confessed the cheeseburger and french fries are his favorite.

My belly was full, but before I could catch my breath, the Dean was due for a 2:30pm meeting with the Associate Deans.

The Deans of the Round Table, if you will, except it was really a square table in A-1002. They discussed everything from student attendance at the April 3<sup>rd</sup> Faculty Presentation Day, to the most efficient computer system for the school.

Interesting? Sure. I had a chance to observe all the details the Dean and his family of Associate Deans must pay attention to in order to run the school. The meeting ran late, so they huddled around the Dean in the elevator discussing last minute items, stopping at every other floor before reaching his office on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level.

Fifteen minutes behind schedule, the Appointments Committee, a small group of NYLS professors, greeted us back at his office. I took my place at the corner of the room and listened as they decided the next Faculty Meeting Agenda, and their picks for potential professor new-hires. Interesting? Yes. It was refreshing to see an intimate circle of professors laughing and candidly expressing themselves.

This meeting wrapped up on time, but there was more to discuss. Before dashing to his final rendezvous of the day, they agreed to meet again later that afternoon.

He was on time for his final meeting—the mother of all meetings—the Faculty Meeting.

Most NYLS Professors attended, unless they were teaching a class. They voted on new classes to offer next year, and the importance of student attendance at the Faculty Presentation Day on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the 2002 Spring Gala—a benefit honoring 9/11 student heroes on April 16<sup>th</sup>. While I was astonished by all of the brilliant minds assembled in C-200, I had a clearer picture of what it means to be the Dean for New York Law School. It means the Dean is only as good as the people working with him, and NYLS is only as good as its students. So while there is certainly a business aspect to all of this conferring, his ultimate goal is how to take care of us, the students.

Working alongside 8 Associate Deans, 56 full-time faculty and 110 adjunct faculty members, 146 administrative staff and support, and not to mention over 1,000 students, the Dean's "To Do" list is never empty. After being Dean for a Day, I was exhausted. I am grateful for the opportunity I had, but one day was more than enough for me—I'll stick to preparing for finals and the BAR.

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# Faculty Presentation Day

**Kelli Brownell**

Not too many students think about the work professors do outside the classroom. However, professors keep themselves quite busy working on scholarly papers, books, and articles that convey legal issues the professor believes in and stands behind.

On Wednesday, April 3, 2002, the entire New York Law School community got a taste of the faculty's work and ideas at the first Faculty Presentation Day—*Reflecting on the Legal Issues of Our Time*.

The all day program, in which professors presented scholarly works and discussed what they felt were the legal issues impacting contemporary society, started with a breakfast at 8 a.m. and lasted until late in the evening. The program consisted of nine sessions and a reception. Panel topics included Legal Education, Dispute Resolution, Dealing with Mental Disability in Trust and Estate Law Practice, The Environment and the Law, Portraits of Grief, Changes in the Law since 9/11-Session I, Economic Justice and Perspectives on Thomas Jefferson and Changes in the Law Since 9/11 - Session II.

During the luncheon session, *Portraits of Grief: Reflecting on the New York Times 9/11 Obituaries Through a Legal Lens*, moderated by Professor Lenni Benson, Professors Carlin Meyer, Karen Gross,

and Faith Kahn shared their own insights about family, survivors, and financial problems in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

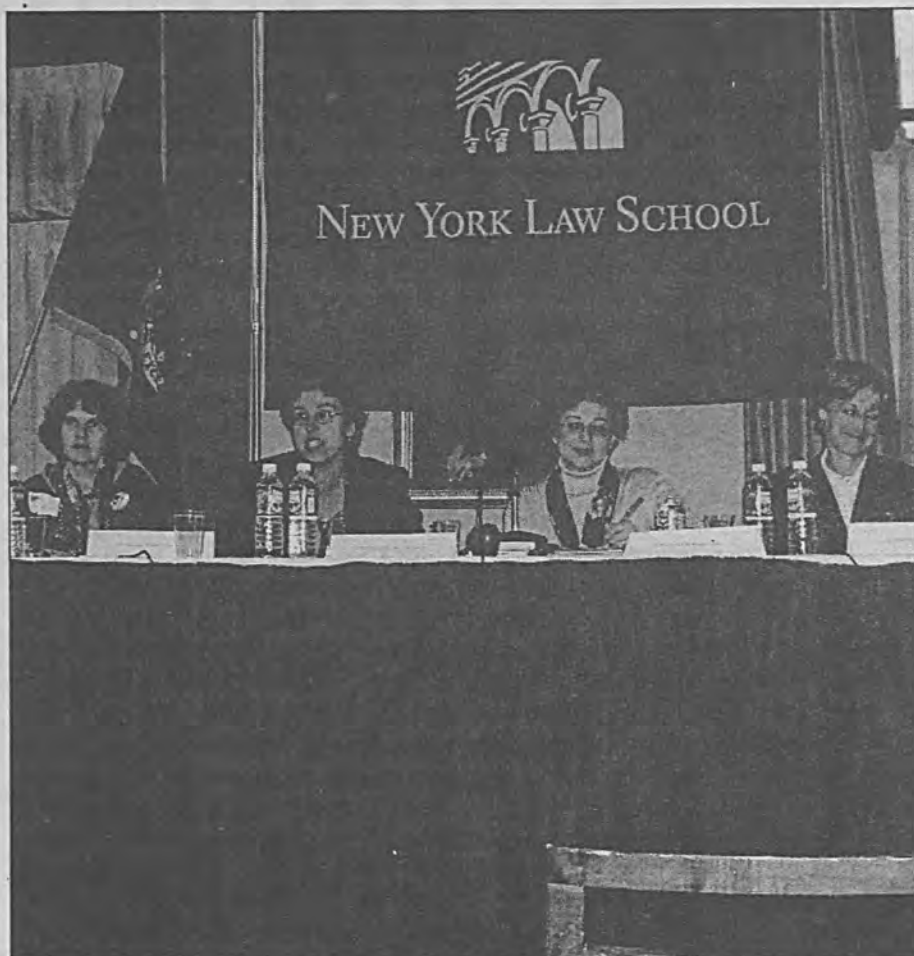
Professor Meyer addressed the issue of families and who should be considered a family member in order to receive financial compensation for loved ones lost. Meyer highlighted the challenges faced by many families since the word "family" has many different meanings, including those that may include a parent taking care of a child and/or elderly parents to same sex couples.

"Reconstruction is not only of steel and glass, but should also take place in the legal system," said Meyer.

Professor Gross then discussed her concerns regarding the lack of financial skills and programs to help family members effectively manage money received.

Finally, Professor Kahn shared her thoughts on the lack of respect for the rule of law in the wake of the terrorist attacks, and the Enron scandal in a corporate context.

Throughout the day, in attending each session, you were able to see how professors share a passion for the law. We go to class and only see one side of the professor—as the teacher. But being able to see them express themselves about their legal beliefs in this type of forum made you realize that they studied law for the same reason you did—because they care.



Professors Meyer, Benson, Gross and Kahn at the first Faculty Presentation Day

## In Memoriam

### WEIRONG LIN '99

On the six-month anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup>, NYLS was notified of the sad news that another NYLS alum was killed during the WTC tragedy. Weirong Lin, Class of 1999, is memorialized on CNN's tribute to those who died in the attack and destruction of the World Trade Center. A classmate remembered taking an international law class with him taught by Professor Cone. Weirong Lin died at the age of 31. He was a resident of Jersey City, N.J., and President of Frank W. Lin & Co., located on the 89th Floor of the North Tower.

### JOSEPH LOSTRANGIO '78

Reinsurance consultant and NYLS alum, Joseph Lostrangio, Class of 1978, was a victim of the WTC attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>. *The New York Times* wrote Joe was born and raised on Long Island, and after receiving his law degree from New York Law School, he accepted a position with the Devonshire Group in the World Trade Center.

According to *The New York Times*, his wife and friends best remember Joe for his exotic cooking, playing Billy Joel songs on his guitar and love for saltwater fish.

*Courtesy Office of Public Affairs*

# editorial

## Only Yesterday

**Christopher Ross**  
Managing Editor

It seems like only yesterday we were thankful that some law school would let us in. I remember attending our first day of class, our first class, took our first exam and questioned our choice to attend law school for the first time, like it was yesterday.

However, despite all that we have gone through in the last three to four years, it's easy to say that the events of yesterday, September 11th, will be our most vivid for years to come.

We all experienced and saw things that had nothing to do with the stresses of law school. In fact, many of us have realized that the stresses of law school are really only a small piece of what matters in the grand scheme of things.

Oftentimes, we forget to do a lot of little things.

I wanted to take a moment to do one of those little things

and say thank you. Thank you to all those that helped me along the way, listened to me bitch about something, took the time to explain some arcane part of the law I couldn't figure out for myself, or just gave me a shoulder to lean on when things got tough. I hope I was able to do the same for at least one other person because so many did it for me.

To those of you who still have time left at NYLS, I say use it wisely because time does fly. And to those who are leaving and preparing for the Bar exam in July, I say good luck.

In closing, I also hope that we all remember the tremendous outpour of help that came from New York and the country on September 11th. We are all, and forever will be, a part of those communities and should continue to help and support those who need it. You now have resources, knowledge of the law, ability and a greater responsibility to help others in need. I hope you do.

## ACADEMIC CALENDAR

### Schedule:

Wednesday, May 1  
Last Day of Classes

Thursday-Friday, May 2-3  
Reading Period

Monday-Friday, May 6-17  
Exam Period (10 days, 8 evenings)

**SUNDAY, JUNE 2**  
**COMMENCEMENT**

## Last Semester!

**Cecilia Blackburn**  
Chief Copy Editor

For the past three and a half years, all I looked forward to was my last semester at NYLS. I figured by that time, I would finally have it all figured out; final exams would become less frightening, and time management issues (always problematic for evening students) would ease up. I thought I could actually relax a little, and dare I say it...have a little FUN! Now, as my last semester is coming to an end, I find myself anticipating...separation anxiety! My life will not seem the same once I no longer have to hike up to school four nights a week. NYLS has truly become my home away from home, and a special part of my life, and I will miss it as well as all of friends I have made along the way.



It looks good on paper...

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The L is the voice of the New York Law School community. We keep the community informed of relevant school news and events and provide a forum for students, alumni, faculty, staff and other members of the NYLS community to express their views and opinions. The L also features content dealing with legal issues and other topics of interest to members of the NYLS community.

The L is independently published by its student members and is released every month while school is in session. Contributions from students, faculty, alumni, staff, and all members of the NYLS community are always welcome.

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# Bar Perspectives

**Kelli Brownell**

It's that time of year again and second year students are scrambling to secure their place in the infamous New York Law in National Perspectives class taught by Professor Joseph Marino. But do they really know what they are getting themselves into? Well, I was curious as to just what all the fuss was about. So, I sat down with Professor Marino to get his perspective on Perspectives.

The first initiatives of the school to raise the bar passage rate began in 1995 through a number of programs. At this time, Professor Marino was not full time and taught as an adjunct professor. Then, the Summer of 1999 came and went and the school's bar pass rate was at an all time low of 58%. The school realized they needed to address the issue and fast. Dean Wellington asked what Professor Marino could accomplish as a full time professor. Marino proposed the National Perspectives class. They realized students needed to develop analytical thinking if they were going to pass the Bar. The students had the knowledge, they just needed to strengthen their analytical skills.

The Perspectives course is comprised of seven subjects that are all tested on the New York Bar Exam: Contracts & Sales, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Corporations, Torts, and Wills & Trusts. Marino presents these subjects to his students through a substantive lecture. These lectures are outlined in handouts students receive at the beginning of the course. He also provides them with problems and supportive testing.

The work the students perform involves homework, mini-tests, two comprehensive tests, and a final. Each subject may be tested in either a multiple choice or essay format. Marino requires students to spend about 12 to 15 hours studying outside of class, which involves class preparation, taking tests, and performing outside class work. He also recommends that students condense the large class outline into a smaller version. He says this not only makes it easier for students to study for the comprehensives, but to also get a jump start on what they will need to do for the Bar Exam.

But just how well has the class been working out? So far so good. In the summer of 2000, the bar pass rates went up for those who took the course, as compared to

those who didn't take the course. But what about the bottom percent of the class? Apparently, the bottom quarter passed at about twice the rate of those who took the class, as opposed to those who didn't take the class.

However, the jump in passage wasn't where the school wanted the students to be.

In the summer of 2001, the bar pass rates went up again for those who were in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile. But the bottom quarter still needed help, so that's why the school started Consolidated Legal Analysis (CLA). Overall, everyone did better with the course than without it. Marino said students who rank in the middle of their class benefit the most—"they have the ability, they just need that extra push."

But can anyone enroll in these courses? It depends. Dean Matasar told *the L*, that Perspectives is open to all students. However, in order to CLA, you must first



**Professor Joseph L. Marino**

take Perspectives. While this class sequence is available to all students, the bottom 30% or fourth quartile is given priority seating. Students closed out of the Fall section of Perspectives have the opportunity to take it in the Spring.

In fact, due to the high demand, according to Marino, the school has assigned multiple class sessions. A live lecture will be conducted in one room and transmitted simultaneously to another room via closed circuit television.

Wow! That's a lot of work for just one class. I don't know how anyone gets all that work done and still has time for all their other classes. Well, herein lies the problem among students. Students have found that they are having a hard time not only preparing for Perspectives, but also in preparing for their other classes. In fact, in one class, students could not participate in a regular class discussion because of a Perspectives Comprehensive exam scheduled that same day.

Needless to say, anyone in the rest of the class who wasn't in Perspectives bore

the brunt of their passing. As a result, those students who "passed" on participating or were not called upon to participate are now required to be "on call" for the rest of the semester to take part in class discussions. Another problem is that many students have other obligations in addition to attending and preparing for classes. They also have family and job responsibilities. In fact, one third-year student said that she couldn't realistically have a job and still do the proper amount of work necessary for Perspectives class.

Here is what some other students had to say about Perspectives:

**Amy Pludwin, Class of 2002** - "The amount of work required can be overwhelming. This course requires much more time and effort than any other class. But if you can dedicate the time, then it is worth taking because it is a good refresher of the bar material before summer bar prep actually begins."

**Brian Gordon, Class of 2002** - "It [National Perspectives] is definitely beneficial for going into the bar exam."

**Edward Maggio, Class of 2002** - "As a third year, working student, it is difficult at times to faithfully complete the assignments for National Perspectives and give an equal amount of attention to your other classes."

So, if you are trying to decide if it's a good idea for you to take National Perspectives, I leave you with one final Marino thought:

"There are 180 ABA approved law schools in the country. No school has ever effectively run a program that has increased the bar passage rate. Ours is the first one that has worked so dramatically. The reason is the workload and because the class is so comprehensive. It is a bold move on behalf of the school."

**Read Lou Russo's  
take on the Bar Exam.**

**Page 10**

# STUDY HARD!

## ATTENTION CLASS OF 2002

As bar exam candidates, you will have an endless amount of questions. To answer those questions and calm your new founded anxiety, let someone who knows just how you feel give you the low down.

### SIGN UP FOR THE BAR BUDDIES PROGRAM!

Shortly, you will receive an official email to sign up. A Bar buddy can ease the pain like no one else can.

## BAR BUDDIES!



# features

## Alumnae Take the Spotlight

*Success Stories and Good Advice at the Annual Spotlight on Women Luncheon*

Susan L. Harper

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, five highly accomplished women attorneys—all NYLS graduates—took center stage in a packed Ernst Steifel room to partake in the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Spotlight on Women Luncheon.

Associate Dean Barbara Leshinsky opened the mid-day affair by stating to the all female audience that 50% of the class of 2002 is women. NYLS alums then spoke of their career paths and provided words of advice to students.

Below are highlights of the event.

**Patricia Ann Fersch, '92**, owns Family Law Center, Inc., a family law practice located on the lower east side. The thrust of her practice is to serve the working poor. Her practice opened after volunteering at Legal Aid following graduation.

**Advice:** Consider making a commitment to public law.

"Professor Carlin Meyer gave a speech about lawyers as public servants. That speech moved me, I still remember it today," said Fersch.

Her practice is one of few that charges clients on a sliding scale according to income.

**Yvette Y. Chang, '85**: Since graduating from NYLS, corporate law attorney, Yvette Chang got her start at Chemical Bank's legal department. She then moved on and joined top law firms, such as Jones Day and Jenkins & Gilchrist Parker Chapin LLP, handling complex corporate transactions, while practicing in the United States and in Taiwan. In between drafting contracts, employment agreements, and



**These Women Rock!** (left to right) Norine F. Krasnoger '85, Valerie Armstrong-Barrows '97, Pamela M. Golinski '89, Yvette Y. Chang '85 and Patricia Ann Fersch '92

handling mergers & acquisitions, she also found time to run in the NYC Marathon and participate in law firm committees, like the recruitment and mentor programs. Yvette also sits on the NYLS Alumni Association Board, and is currently a Corporate Associate with St. John & Wayne LLC. While at NYLS, she was an active member of the Asian Student Association and Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal for International Law*.

**Advice:** Don't be afraid to promote yourself and ask for what you want. Chang stressed that it is very important for people to be aware of your accomplishments, especially during employment review times. She also shared tips for success with the audience, which are reprinted with Chang's

permission, exclusively on page 7 of **the L**.

**Valerie Armstrong-Barrows, '97**: While attending NYLS as an evening student, Valerie had more on her plate than homework. She participated in Moot Court, founded a student group, Law Students for Child Advocacy, served as an active member in the Black Law Students' Association (BLSA), contributed to the *The Reporter*, the former NYLS student newspaper, all four years of her law school career, and somehow raised a family of four children.

Her youngest was just nine-months-old when she began at NYLS. Valerie stated that her first job after school, representing the best interest of children in Family Court, was "probably the most important job I had in my life."

Today, Valerie represents another often-overlooked group: senior citizens. She is in charge of supervising services for elderly people who have been abused—physically, emotionally and financially, for the Jewish Association for Services for the Aged. Valerie also owns a private practice and sits on six governmental related task forces.

**Advice:** Think about what you want to do as an attorney. It will have an effect on clients, judges, etc. Also, take advantage of the opportunities and people you meet at NYLS.

"NYLS provided me with an outlook. At this school the diversity of students and the careers they came in with is exceptional. Take advantage of it," exclaimed Vale-

rie.

**Pamela M. Golinski, '89**: Former award winning journalist and Vassar graduate, now Entertainment Lawyer, Pamela Golinski was also a member of NYLS's *Law Review*.

After becoming "burned out" from journalism, Pamela stated she realized what mattered to her were the arts.

Golinski said she is an example of "never-say-never." As a student at NYLS, she shared that contracts class often intimidated her. However, today that is all she does. She enjoys it immensely since the work has a beginning and an end, unlike other areas of practice.

"I feel what I do has value to my clients," said Golinski.

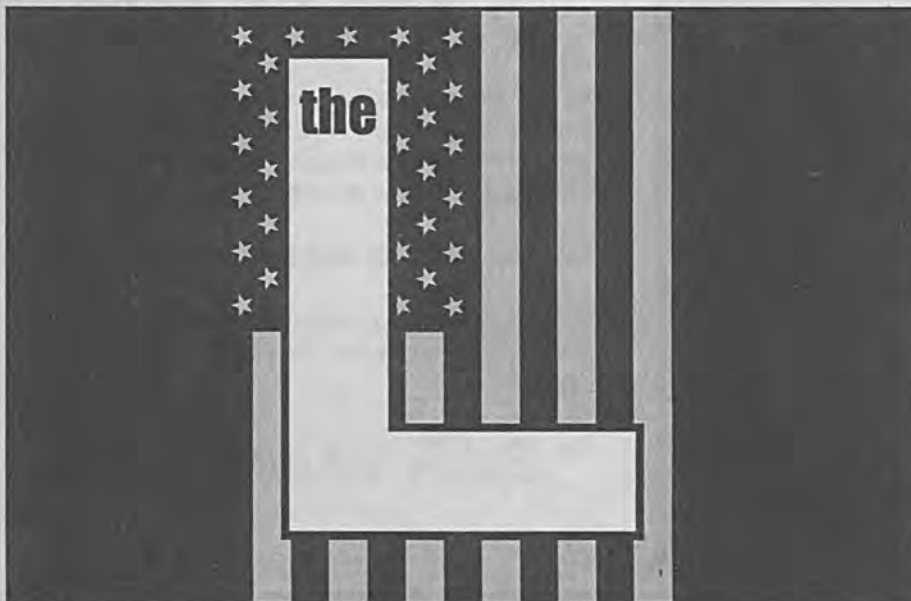
**Advice:** You must think about what has meaning to you. Also, it is very important to think about how you want to spend your day and to consider the sort of people you would like to work with, because you'll be spending as much time with these people as your spouse.

**Norine F. Krasnoger, '85**: This international activist came to NYLS because of her volunteer advocacy and her sharp writing and speaking skills. Krasnoger owns her own practice, Krasnoger & Krasnoger LLP, with her NYU law graduate daughter, Julie. She shared that she always thought she would do trial advocacy, however, as it turned out, she applied for an immigration position helping Jewish people out of the former USSR. Clients liked her as their representative, she said, because she worked hard on their behalf. Often the opposing counsel was the government. She also explained how her work brought her in contact with the INS and Department of Justice.

Krasnoger worked for a big firm before striking out on her own.

"One of the most rewarding part of my practice is bonding with my clients," said Krasnoger. In fact, one enthusiastic and satisfied client once said jokingly to Krasnoger that they were going to name their next child after her.

**Advice:** Think about what you want. If you do what you like, you will be good at it. Network with your fellow students and faculty. Trust your instincts. Make changes when necessary.





# Top 15 Tips for Getting Ahead as a Law Student and an Associate

## Set Goals

1. Set short-term and long-term professional and personal goals, and prioritize your activities. For example: Short-term professional goal: getting an excellent legal education, passing the bar and getting a rewarding legal job.

## Find Balance

2. Find a balance between school, work and personal life. Don't spend an excessive amount of time studying. Look at your law school studies as a full-time job and devote the appropriate amount of time, not too much, not too little. Remember, moderation in all things. Find time to exercise regularly, eat properly and make time for family and friends and other activities you enjoy.

## Studying

3. Use your time wisely; prepare for midterms or finals by doing practice exams. Use study aids to help you practice issues spotting and identifying the main elements of substantive law (which is what you are generally tested on in law school exams).

## The Job Search

4. When job-hunting, be flexible, keep your options open to any opportunities that may come up.

5. Grades and class rank *do* matter. Large law firms and other employers use them as objective criteria to assist in screen-

ing interview candidates. However, developing unique skills, or taking part in internships and other activities, may help distinguish you as a candidate.

6. Take advantage of extra-curricular activities and attend programs to help you develop additional legal and professional skills. Reach out to other students, alumni, NYLS faculty and administrators who can be good sources of information and advice.

7. The following are some selected websites with helpful job postings, career and industry advice: [www.acca.com](http://www.acca.com) (website for corporate counsel; contains

a detailed Jobline); [www.lawjobs.com](http://www.lawjobs.com) (legal classifieds); contains a Career section; [www.nylawyer.com](http://www.nylawyer.com) (legal classifieds, Law Firm Trends and Law Firm Life; contains a Dear Abby section with informative Q&A); [www.emplawyernet.com](http://www.emplawyernet.com) (national website, NYLS also participates); [www.hotjobs.com](http://www.hotjobs.com); [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)

8. Take 2 bar exams (NY and another)...keep your options open!

## Impressing Your Boss

9. Develop a reputation for excellence: You are being judged on your performance from day one (approach every assignment as though it is the most important assignment you may get and do your best). Be detail-oriented, hard working, and efficient. Be well organized, responsive, responsible and proactive. Under-promise, over-deliver: meet your deadlines with plenty of time to spare (if the partner asks for a memo by Monday afternoon, have the memo on the partner's chair by Monday

morning). Be a team player that works well with others (including all other attorneys, partners, clients, opposing counsel, and your staff).

## Developing as a Legal Professional

10. Actively manage your career development. Do a regular (mid-year/annual self-career assessment). Ask yourself if you are developing at the same rate as other attorneys at your level? If not, seek out work and other attorneys/partners; volunteer for assignments.

11. Promote Yourself! During performance review time and at other times, it is okay to promote your accomplishments (if you don't, no one else will - partners are busy).

12. Develop legal, industry and business knowledge: Read newspapers, periodicals, industry publications, so that you can provide solutions to the problems your client faces.

13. Develop formal and informal mentors: Mentors can help show you the ropes and let you know how things really work. They also can lead you to good assignments. On the other hand, not having a mentor can also have detrimental effects, e.g., not having a partner to speak up for you during partnership meetings or during review time. Mentors can be anyone: a partner or senior associate in your firm, someone outside your firm who can provide valuable advice or suggestions, people from other organizations. Having a mentor relationship is a two-way street: you need to also provide value to your mentor. You can also mentor people who are more junior than you.

## Developing Business/Marketing Yourself

14. Start networking and making contacts now: It's never too late, but it helps to start early: a partner once told me that the time it takes for a contact to develop into actual business is at least five years. So, the person you meet today at a business function, if all goes well, will be able to give you business in about five years!

Developing business is about networking and relationship building. Adopt a "how can I help you approach." Clients are interested in what you can do for them, not what business they can give to you. If you can help them solve one of their problems or be of use, that may help open the door for you down the road.

Develop lists of everyone you know and categorize (friends, bar associations, industry organizations, charitable organizations), then try to maintain regular contact (phone calls, emails, breakfast/lunch/dinner meetings or coffee), send them information of interest to them (articles, seminar invitations).

15. Finally, become visible: volunteer to write or publish newsletters, articles in various legal periodicals, magazines or in your firm or company newsletter.

Author's Note: The opinions expressed in this article are the opinions of the author alone and are not to be attributed to St. John & Wayne or New York Law School.



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# What They Failed to Mention at the Luncheon

*Women and Attorneys of Color Lag in the Partnership Ranks.*

**Susan L. Harper**

"Years ago this event would have been called 'Spotlight on Woman,'" said Dean Richard Matasar in his closing remarks at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Spotlight On Women Luncheon.

However, unlike those years where few women held a seat at NYLS, Matasar proudly pointed out that last year almost 60% of the entering NYLS class was made up of women.

While these numbers reflect great strides for women in legal education [and obviously say a great deal about NYLS's commitment to women in legal education], parity for women within the legal professional, particularly, within large law firms, is nothing but shameful.

Surprisingly, these significant issues were not covered at the event, though one alumna in attendance told me that the reason she left her position was because it was obvious there was no room for women in the firm's partnership circle.

"I looked around at the partners and I didn't see any women. I decided it was time to go," she stated.

Welcome to law firm reality—2002.

According to the National Association of Law Placement (NALP) women and attorneys of color are underrepresented in the partnership ranks, as found in a recent analysis of the group's 2001-2002 *National Directory of Legal Employers* (consisting primarily of large firm listings and included attorney demographic information for about 108,000 partners, associates, staff attorneys and senior attorneys in about 625 firms nationwide).

NALP research reveals that women account for 15.80% of the partners, while attorneys of color account for 3.55% of the partners in the nation's major law firms. Compare this with partnership numbers in 1993, women accounted for 12.27% of partners and attorneys of color accounted for 2.55%. NALP concluded that women are making slow, but steady strides.

On a more promising note, the NALP said that more women are summer associates. According to the NALP, women attorneys now hold 41.94% of positions as associates or staff/senior attorneys, reflecting their respective representation among recent law school graduates. However, at

13.70%, attorneys of color lagged in their representation among recent graduates. Attorneys of color are defined as including African-Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, American Indians, and Hispanics of any race, said NALP.

On a state-to-state basis, NALP's research reveals New York and New Jersey are not the most promising states for women and attorneys of color seeking the partnership route. However, neighboring Connecticut fairs better, says the NALP data, along with California, Texas, Michigan and Florida—in particular Miami—being the best city for women and attorneys of color.

While the NALP's research is telling, the group did not provide any insight as to why women lagged so far behind men. One factor may be that the time-line when men and women are on the partnership track usually coincides with a woman's childbearing years. And, although many firms have set up part-time schedules or flex schedules to accommodate family oriented employees, employees are often not encouraged to use them.

It is no coincidence then that many women attorneys choose legal position within the government—the opportunity for advancement is greater coupled with more flexibility to meet family demands.

The trade off, however, is obvious. Government positions do not yield the same financial rewards as the private sector does. According to the *New York Law Journal's* annual salary survey for large firms and government organizations, first year associates in large firms make a base salary of \$125,000 per year (this number does not include the hefty thousands of dollars in bonuses paid out), while counterparts in government positions, such as the DA's office or Corporation Counsel, make about \$47,000—a three-fold difference.

While we can applaud the great strides in the law school world, women still have a long way to go in powerful partnership circles at large firms. The glass ceiling has yet to be shattered. However, when one door shuts, another one opens. As a result, women are becoming more enterprising and opening firms of their own.

If you can't join 'em, beat 'em.

## GPAnxiety

*Don't let it get to you!*

**Dwight H. S. Day**

So your GPA was not a 4.0 and you did not make law review! While it may seem that your future is bleak, I'm here to tell you that all is not lost, and the almost \$100,000 in student loans will eventually be repaid. I was very disappointed in not getting a "legal" summer job after my first year. However, from a practical point of view, not many firms hire first year law students. So, I just returned to my former company and worked as a temp.

While many students put together their resumes, cover letters, etc., to hand over to the Career Services Office, or potential employers to land that interview at that top firm, I was really just laid back. I know that my GPA was not good enough to place me in the top 50%, (Oops!! Did I mean 5%, maybe not), but that does not mean I am dumb or any less smart than the guy who got an A. We all had the same professors, attended the same classes, and know the same thing. We just did not all write the same answers in our blue books.

After a devastating first year performance, I was rather shocked that I could do better if only I pushed myself a little more. I realized that there was an approach to getting good grades. It was not an outline, it was not attending every class and taking great notes, it was not smooching up

to the professor, and it certainly was not talking up in class. I looked back at the classes in which I did well (above B+) and asked myself what did I do differently? Those classes intrigued me, the professors unknowingly pushed me, those classes made sense and they were not abstract, but very real life.

Strangely enough, one of the classes in which I did well, I had felt very confident that I had done well, but still only expected a B+ at most. In another class, the professor totally ripped apart my draft. However, after following his suggestions, it turned out that I learned so much more than the substantive law.

I landed my first job by logging on to the website promoted by the Career Services Office. As I searched for jobs, I came across one in Clifton, NJ, a town right next to mine. I faxed my resume and other documents, scheduled an interview, and after a few reference checking (including one of the law professors who gave me my above B+ grade) was given the job.

All this to say, if you happen to be in the bottom 90%, or even the lower half of that 90%, you have to look at the BIG PICTURE. In the end, that's what matters. You will have acquired the knowledge and the skills to function and to fulfill your duties as an advocate, or whatever field you choose.

## LAURA HIDALGO PRAISES GALLAGHER BAR TRAINING SCHOOLS

I think what helped me most about your class was the rote memorization, the memorization drills, and going through essay writing step-by-step, line by line, paragraph by paragraph. The World Cup of Memorization was a lot of fun—it motivated me and I hope you'll keep that in your curriculum.

I needed the forced memorization, as well as a "starting point"—prior to taking your class, I was completely overwhelmed by all the material I was supposed to know. I was so overwhelmed, in fact, that I couldn't figure out where to start, what to start memorizing. As a result, I really didn't have anything memorized verbatim on past bar exams (I had tried to just absorb all the Barbri materials and know the "basic concepts"). Your course helped overcome that, because within the first hour of the first day, you had us memorizing. By the end of the first couple of classes, I had already memorized more than I thought I could in such a short time, which gave me confidence in my ability to continue. You gave us the most important "morsels" to know, a core of the most important rules of law to have memorized word for word—you gave me a starting point from which I was able to gain confidence, which in turn motivated me to keep memorizing and practicing—and sure enough, I was able to memorize enough and practice enough essays to pass the bar exam. Your method works, and I've already shared that with everyone I've talked to about my recent bar pass.

I will find out from the NYBOLE whether that was the sixth or seventh bar exam I took (I think I blocked the exact number out some time ago) and will send that to you as well as my score information.

Thanks again Dr. Gallagher!!! Your class changed my life.

-Laura

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# The Bar Exam

It has been one month since the bar exam. I still wake up at night hearing John Pieper's voice reciting a rule of law or giving me another precious mnemonic.

Soon the results will be released and the wait will be over. My life will no longer be in limbo. Pass or fail the bar exam was a success.

It all began with a flurry of emotion. Law school ended and bar review began. No time to take a deep breath, take a vacation or even take in a movie. All that I knew was that for the next 42 days John Pieper would be my coach and I would follow him to hell and back if it would help me pass the Bar Exam.

During the first few days everything flowed. There was plenty of time for all the readings, the assignments and even the extra, "if you have time," stuff. Then it begins to overtake you. Your bad study day or even a bad study morning gets you behind the eight ball. You wonder, "how will

I make up what I missed or misunderstood." Should I just skip it? What if it is on the bar? And right at that moment within all your internal fighting and wondering, you just lost another hour of study time.

If you are like me, you will wake up every morning around seven and drag your depressed body into the shower. After a longer than usual bathing session, your day begins. I must say this is where *organization is crucial*.

Think about it, if you sit down every day and figure out what you will be doing that day you will waste precious study time. All I can say is **start organizing now**. Get binders, pens, post-its, highlighters etc... anything that you will use then, get it now.

About midway through bar review and one thousand practice MBE questions later, you will feel as though nothing has changed; that after all your hard work and you still get the same MBE question wrong over and over again. Depression will mount

and anger will build. This is what the bar examiners want. They want to play with your head, and trust me they will. Nothing I say or anyone else says will change that. As much as the bar exam is memorizing 23 or so subjects, and answering silly trick multiple choice questions, it is also a head game.

Finally, your journey will be ending and the only hurdle left will be the test. A two or three day extravaganza (depending on how many states you take), that begins with a security check that delays your entrance to your seat by ten extra minutes. Unfortunately, the first day will give your false hope. The New York Essays are hard and the graders look for specific things. However, the questions are fair and if you study properly you will be able to answer them. Maybe not perfectly, but at least you will have an idea of what the questions ask.

Then, day two will happen. The Multistate portion of the bar exam will kick your butt. The questions are confusing and the answer choices are even more confusing. All I can say is that after the MBE, I thought

I failed (still think I might have) and I wanted to throw-up. My stomach turned for hours and I contemplated going home and not returning for the New Jersey exam on Thursday.

When it was all over on Thursday, I felt nothing—no relief, no excitement, nothing. This was the most anti-climatic thing I have ever done. Four years of my life had passed and now I finished. I had no idea if I had accomplished my goal of passing the New York Bar Exam.

That is how it happens folks. Before you know it, the bar is here and gone—then the waiting begins. Everyone will tell you, "I am sure you did fine," or some dumb thing like, "hey you're the smartest person I know, you had to pass." All sounds great and I always smile and say thanks, but it gets to you.

In the end, remember the New York Bar Exam is not and will not measure the person you are or the intelligence inside your head, it only gives you the keys to the club.



**Louis J. Russo III**

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## Movie Maverick

Hello. By now, you probably know that Halle Berry and I didn't work out. This year, she was awarded an Oscar for her performance in *Monster's Ball*. Did you hear her thank me during her acceptance speech? Neither did I, she must still be bitter over our "break-up." Anyway, here are some of my Spring Break flicks:



**Cory Garcia**

The Movie  
Maverick

#### Showtime

Starring Eddie Murphy & Robert Deniro  
Directed by Tom Dey  
Warner Brothers

If you think you might like a behind the scenes look at MTV's "Real World" and a watered down version of "Analyze This," then you might enjoy this movie. Besides the name recognition, the movie does not have a lot to offer. Deniro and Murphy should admit themselves to rehab because they must have been very high to be in this high budget, low quality waste of time. It gets a thumbs-down, upside down L; if the movie was a high school student, I would give it a detention. Get the point? To make a long story short, Busta Rhymes and Professor Sinclair probably have better chemistry.

#### We Were Soldiers

Starring Mel Gibson  
Directed by Randall Wallace  
Paramount Pictures

During war, Hollywood never misses an opportunity to exploit a situation. However, this movie distinguishes itself from the overwhelming amount of war movies. In contrast to the previous review, this movie was great. Every now and again, different forms of entertainment force you to evaluate your significance within the game of life. This film does just that. Based on the true story of the first major battle of the Vietnam War, this film tells a tale of courageous men outnumbered and their acts of loyalty toward each other. Along the way, it deals with the struggles the soldiers' families deal with back home. In the Ia Drang Valley of Vietnam, Lt. Colonel Harold Moore (Mel Gibson) and more than 400 soldiers find themselves surrounded by 4,000 enemy soldiers. Check this one out.

Well, I have to get back to studying for Perspectives. And don't forget, if the Movie Maverick doesn't approve, it's not the movie. Peace.



# letters to the L

## Working vs. Non-Working Evening Students: A Level Playing Field?

Dear L,

A lack of time is the bane of every law student's existence. Evening students, given their external professional and familial obligations are particularly afflicted by this ailment. However, it is more than merely a lack of time that afflicts evening students. It is the pressure and stress of being in a professional environment day in and day out, the angst of family and fiscal obligations above and beyond that of ordinary law students. At first glance, it would appear that these burdens do not create inequities because all evening students must

endure them. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The playing field is not level because many evening students do not work.

Non-working evening students have phenomenally greater amounts of time in which to study and complete written assignments than those of us who do work. Additionally, they do not have to bear the stress of being in a professional environment each day prior to coming to class. Consequently, these individuals are better able to focus in class and devote more time, effort, and energy to studying outside the classroom and the completion of written assignments. Clearly, by any standard, students who have

an extra 40+ hours per week to study and complete assignments have a great advantage over those of us who spend those same 40+ hours at work. Although I will refrain from making value judgments, some might characterize this situation as grossly unfair.

Of course, some will read this and suggest that perhaps some students need more time to complete the work. I would argue in response that no student should have "extra time" to complete the work. The curve used in each course is based on the fundamental assumption that the playing field is level. Allowing a small number of students an extra 40+ hours per week in

which to complete the work is inconsistent with the purpose of the curve.

I do not have a ready solution to this problem, and I don't mean to suggest that there is a magical solution, which can be immediately implemented to correct the situation. I do, however, believe that this issue addresses fundamental principles of fairness and that it is of sufficient importance to be addressed by the faculty and the administration.

—Anonymous

## Repackage Lawyering

Dear L,

Legal Writing & Research, Written & Oral Advocacy, Lawyering, and Applied Analysis should be combined into one course entitled: Lawyering: Professional Skills. The course would be 2 credits during the Fall Semester and 3 credits during the Spring Semester. Structuring the curriculum in this manner would allow Contracts I & II to be combined in the Fall Semester, and allow students to take another required substantive course during the Spring Semester. This proposition is advantageous from both an economic and pedagogical perspective. Students would gain a more comprehensive picture of legal methodology from cradle to grave, and faculty resources would be preserved for other endeavors.

The curriculum would be based on a hypothetical client situation to be created and presented to students on the first day of classes. Professors would then take students through the hypothetical giving practical lessons on conducting legal research generally, and more specifically, for this hypothetical. Basically, covering the material formerly comprising the Legal Research element of Legal Writing & Research. Then, students would receive assignments identical to those presently assigned in Legal Writing & Research and Lawyering based on the hypothetical, i.e., client inter-

views and office memorandum. At the end of the semester the professor would spend a class or two on exam taking techniques.

During the second semester, students would conduct more exercises akin to those assigned in Lawyering and have a Mock Trial based on the hypothetical case. Then, students would move on to writing the various appellate briefs and conducting oral arguments, as they would have done in Written & Oral Advocacy.

Structuring the curriculum and classes in this manner would allow for students to do everything they are presently doing, in four separate classes, in a more comprehensive and advantageous manner. Expenditures on faculty resources for basic first year courses would be reduced and better utilized in other areas. Moreover, by combining these classes student schedules are streamlined and made more efficient. For reasons of pedagogy, efficiency, and fiscal responsibility the faculty and administration should adopt the above proposal.

I have written this letter with the belief that students ought to be more involved in curricular matters. I concede that the above is imperfect, but nevertheless, I think it points in the right direction. I invite any member of the law school community to respond to this letter on the merits.

—Noah P. Melnick

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